



Angels of Assisi Foster Handbook

Angels of Assisi Affordable Veterinary Clinic and Adoption Center

415 Campbell Ave. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016

540-344-8707

Hours

Clinic: Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

Adoption Center: Monday – Sunday, 2pm – 6pm

Contact Information

Adoption Center cell phone:	540-293-6654
Emergency Vet cell phone:	540-355-7713
Chelsea Ellis – Foster Coordinator	cellis@angelssofarassisi.org
Bobbie Patterson-Wiggins – Trainer	bwiggins@angelssofarassisi.org
Frances Arnold – Appointments	fmarnold@angelssofarassisi.org
Matthew Brown – Volunteer Coordinator	mbrown@angelssofarassisi.org

If your foster animal needs to be seen for a routine visit or anything not related to an illness, please use the online form to make an appointment. You can find this form on our website, angelssofarassisi.org under 'Get Involved' and then 'Members'. The full web address is: <http://angelssofarassisi.org/fosterappointment.html>. You may also e-mail Frances at fmarnold@angelssofarassisi.org.

If your foster animal needs to be seen for an illness that is NOT an emergency, please contact the Adoption Center cell phone at **540-293-6654**.

If your foster animal needs to be seen immediately for a life-threatening emergency, call the vet's emergency cell phone at **540-355-7713**.

**Do not call the Angels of Assisi front desk and leave a message if you have a sick or injured animal.
Call the appropriate numbers listed above.**

WHO WE ARE

Angels of Assisi and Harmony Farm Sanctuary are a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and care of all living creatures.

We provide reduced cost medical care to companion animals with special emphasis on spaying and neutering to prevent pet overpopulation. We provide shelter, care and sustenance to companion and domesticated farm animals in need, including an adoption center for homeless dogs and cats and a farm animal sanctuary.

With community support, accomplishments to date include:

85,000 low cost spay and neuter surgeries

8,500 low cost wellness visits

4,500 feral cat sterilizations

8,000 adoptions

850 animals rescued from puppy mills, animal control seizures, and hoarding cases

Our mission is to educate the public that companion and farm animals are not objects for human use but are living, sentient creatures deserving respect and kindness.

WHAT IS FOSTERING?

Fostering is a great way to help an organization by opening your home and heart to an animal and providing the extra space, time, and attention some animals need. Foster families work one-on-one with an animal and learn more about the animal to help find it the best possible home. By placing an animal in a foster home, the animal can learn how to act in a home environment and, hopefully, have a smooth transition from foster animal to adopted pet.

What are the requirements for being a foster?

Requirements will be based on each individual animal's needs. We will do our best to match each animal with the best foster home. Some animals will require extra time (such as orphaned kittens or puppies), some require knowledge of a specific breed and its characteristics, and some require a person with extra patience and willingness to work through some issues.

Animals Needing Foster

There are various reasons why an animal needs a foster home. These can include:

- Recovering from a medical procedure/illness
- Needs retraining on basic manners/housetraining
- Too small/young to be in the shelter
- Emergency situations where extra space is needed

No matter what the reason, all animals benefit from being in a foster home and the reassurance that humans bring good things.

How Long Do Animals Spend in Foster Care?

The time commitment for fostering varies greatly and depends on the situation. Newborn kittens and puppies will stay in foster until they reach 8-12 weeks of age. Adult animals can spend just a couple of days in a foster home or several months, depending on the situation and availability of you. We welcome and appreciate all offers to foster.

How Do Foster Animals Find Their Forever Homes?

Foster homes are vital to learning more about an animal. As a foster parent, you can let people know about your foster animal and share the great qualities he or she has. **If someone expresses interest in adopting your foster animal, direct them to our website or have them come to our location to fill out an adoption application. It is important to not promise the animal to anyone, as applications are processed in the order they are received and not every applicant will be approved.** We strive to make a match for every adopter. Also remember, meet and greets with potential adopters and their pets cannot happen without an approved application. This approved application must be sent to you by Assisi staff.

If your foster animal is not yet on our website, please contact your foster coordinator to be granted access to add him/her. When adding the animal, please provide as much information as possible and use your creativity to write up a nice bio for your foster animal. Do not include your personal contact information in the bio portion of the page. This will prevent miscommunication from happening between fosters, adopters, and Assisi staff.

There are many other ways to promote your foster animal. These include, but are not limited to:

- Attending off-site adoption events
- Using social media sites to share your foster animal
- Taking advantage of 'Pet of the Week' slots on local news stations (e-mail your foster coordinator for details)
- Attend training classes offered to foster animals by 'Field of Dreams'

We show our animals off at off-site adoption events on a regular basis. Fosters are strongly encouraged to attend these and stay as long as possible to allow their foster animal time to be seen and, hopefully, find that perfect home. Adoptions are handled on a case-by-case basis and we strive to find the perfect match for each adopter. Foster homes are a wealth of information and your input and opinion is greatly appreciated and taken into consideration during the adoption process.

What to Expect in the First Few Days

Depending on the age and overall health of an animal, it is not uncommon to see these symptoms when bringing home a new foster animal:

Loss of appetite – lots of animals, especially cats, can stop eating and drinking for a couple of days while adjusting to their new routine and surroundings. Cats can also go several days without using their litter box. If this continues for more than 3 days, please contact us.

Diarrhea – This is a symptom of stress and will usually resolve itself. It can also be caused by a sudden switch in food. If you want to feed your foster animal something other than the Purina products we use, we suggest getting enough to mix in with your current food and transition slowly. This will greatly reduce the stomach upset. If it does not get better, please contact us.

Hiding – Very common in cats; we recommend giving foster kitty access to one room or keeping confined in a crate until he or she has acclimated and become used to the surroundings.

These three things seem to be the most common concerns. If you have any other concerns, feel free to contact your foster coordinator for guidance.

In Case of Emergency

Fostering isn't without its incidents. Sometimes things happen, and it's important to know how to handle them. Listed below are just several of the things that could happen while an animal is in your care. These are worst-case scenarios, but it's better to be safe than sorry.

<u>If your foster animal...</u>	<u>Contact...</u>
Is sick, but it's not life-threatening (sniffles, vomiting/diarrhea [not on-going], etc.)	Frances for sick appointment
Is sick and needs care IMMEDIATELY (bleeding, broken bones, excessive vomiting/diarrhea, etc.)	Emergency vet cell phone
Is missing	Adoption Center cell & email all staff

If you have any other concerns but aren't sure who you should contact, call the Adoption Center cell phone. We will point you in the right direction.

It's also important to note that sometimes bad things happen and this can include the death of a foster animal. This is very true in the case of orphaned kittens and puppies under 8 weeks old. Any newborn animal is fragile and no matter what you do, sometimes it's just not meant to be. We know it's heartbreaking to lose a foster and hope you understand that it's not your fault.

FOSTERING CATS AND KITTENS (OVER 8 WEEKS OLD)

Some say cats are the easiest to foster, and we tend to agree! They require little work and give so much back. Here, we will cover behavioral issues, illnesses, and routine vet care so your foster cat stays healthy and so do your own cats!

Supplies Needed

This is a recommended list of supplies needed to foster a cat with Angels of Assisi. Some (or all) of these can be provided to you. You may also purchase your own supplies, but be sure to keep the receipt to claim as a charitable donation!

- Crate or extra room (spare bathroom works great!) to acclimate kitty to new surroundings
- Food and water bowls
- Litter box/scoop
- Litter (clumping or non-clumping, your preference)
- Food (it is recommended to feed Purina Cat Chow [blue bag], so if your foster cat comes back to the Adoption Center, there won't be a sudden change in food. You can also give canned food in addition to dry, if you'd like)
- Extras, such as a bed, scratching post, and toys will help kitty's stay with you be enjoyable

Behavioral Issues

Sometimes cats aren't on their best behavior. Here, we will cover some of the behavioral issues you might run into and some solutions to help kitty behave.

Problem: Aggression towards other cats

Solution: Slow introduction is the key. We strongly recommend keeping foster kitty separated from your kitties for at least 10-14 days. This is so you can monitor for any illnesses that may arise and also allow foster kitty time to adjust to the new surroundings before being introduced to new cats. If you keep foster kitty in a spare room, you may start to see paws coming out from under the door. Try feeding yummy canned food to each cat on either side of the door, with the door cracked just enough so each cat can see and smell the other. The goal is for each cat to associate good things with the other cat. Some fosters prefer to keep foster kitty separated from their own pets for the duration. We let each foster decide whether or not they will integrate a foster kitty.

Problem: Scratching

Solution: You don't want your furniture scratched and ruined and neither do potential adopters. Having a cat that is trained to scratch only on the appropriate things is a bonus. If foster kitty gravitates towards undesirable areas such as your couch or other furniture, try these tips:

- Squirt foster kitty with a water bottle when he or she begins to scratch
- Put double-sided tape on places of interest. Cats hate the sticky feel on their paws

- Place the scratchers and towers near the areas where they scratch. Redirect them to the appropriate items when they begin to scratch.
- Corrugated cardboard, sisal rope, and natural wood are the preferred materials for scratching
- Place a scratcher by their bed; kitties love to scratch as soon as they wake up

Problem: Litter box avoidance

Solution: Keep foster kitty confined to a small area at first. This will help reduce the chances of him or her forgetting where the box is or not being able to get to it in time. Cats are clean creatures by nature, so a dirty litter box is a turn off. Imagine if you had to use a dirty bathroom on a regular basis. Keeping the box clean by scooping it on a regular basis and completely changing the litter weekly will help reinforce good litter box habits. If multiple cats are using the same litter box(es), it may be necessary to add another box. Medical issues shouldn't be ruled out either; UTI's (urinary tract infections) can cause cats to urinate outside the box. If your foster kitty has used the box religiously up until recently, call us to schedule an appointment to check for a possible UTI.

Problem: Chewing plants or other inappropriate items

Solution: Remove all poisonous plants and items (see attached sheet) to avoid harm. When you catch foster kitty chewing on something inappropriate, use a squirt bottle to give correction. It's important to note, cats do not respond well to punishment. Simple corrections such as the water bottle are quick and effective without harming the bond he or she has with you.

Keeping Foster Kitty Healthy

Because our cats come from various walks of life and their medical background isn't always known, it's important to keep your own cats up to date on their vaccines, especially if you plan on introducing your foster kitty to your own cats after the recommended 10-14 day isolation period. This section will cover the various illnesses a cat can have, their symptoms, and the routine vet care given to all our cats.

Common Illnesses in Cats

Panleukopenia

Also called 'feline distemper,' panleukopenia is a serious viral infection that generally affects kittens and young cats. It is very contagious and almost always fatal.

Symptoms: Fever, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite

Treatment: Veterinary care but almost always fatal

Transmission: Very contagious, especially when in contact with feces or vomit

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

Very common in shelter cats, this viral infection is referred to as 'a kitty cold'.

Symptoms: Sneezing, watery/goopy eyes, runny nose, fever

Treatment: Usually a 7-14 day course of oral antibiotics

Transmission: Contagious

Calicivirus

This is an upper respiratory infection gone bad. It affects the lower respiratory tract and lungs causing pneumonia and oral ulcers.

Symptoms: Sneezing, runny nose and eyes, loss of appetite, oral ulcers

Treatment: Veterinary care, including antibiotics

Transmission: Very contagious to other cats

Rhinotracheitis

This is a type of upper respiratory infection that often infects those with calicivirus.

Symptoms: Sneezing, coughing, fever, runny eyes and nose

Treatment: Veterinary care, including antibiotics

Transmission: Very contagious to other cats

Chlamydia

Also called pneumonitis, this bacterium attacks the respiratory tract and produces conjunctivitis.

Symptoms: Loss of appetite, fever, nasal discharge, red eyes

Treatment: Veterinary care, including antibiotics

Transmission: Very contagious to other cats

Earmites

These are tiny parasites that live in the ear canal

Symptoms: Itching, head shaking, scratching, dark brown discharge in the ears

Treatment: Veterinary care, including topical treatment (such as Revolution) or medication applied directly into the ear canal

Transmission: Contagious to other animals, but usually must result in direct contact

Ringworm

This is a fungus related to athlete's foot and is not an actual worm

Symptoms: Irregular patches of missing fur, skin will appear dry and scaly

Treatment: Veterinary care, including an injection or topical creams

Transmission: Very contagious to other animals and humans; does require direct contact with the animal

Fleas

These tiny bugs feed on the blood of cats, dogs, humans, and other animals. Although they are small, they usually attack in large numbers

Symptoms: Intense itching and scratching

Treatment: Topical application such as Frontline or Revolution

Transmission: Very contagious to other animals and people

Round, Tape, and Hook Worms

Most commonly seen in kittens and young cats, these parasites affect the cat's digestive system

Symptoms: Bloated belly, inability to gain weight

Treatment: Oral dewormer medication

Transmission: Contagious if animals come into contact with (and subsequently ingest) the feces of the infected pet

Cleaning Procedures

It's important to keep a sick foster kitty separated from healthy resident cats, but it's also important to remember to keep foster kitty's area clean so he can get to feeling better quicker. Using a 10% bleach solution will kill most bacteria and viruses. Soak the items and let stand for several minutes before rinsing the solution. If your last foster cat or kitten(s) were diagnosed with panleukopenia, you may be asked to wait several months before fostering again, due to the highly contagious nature of the disease.

Routine Vet Care

Foster cats will be provided with routine vet care at no cost to the foster parent. Below is a table outlining the vaccine schedule for both adult cats (over 6 months of age) and kittens.

PROCEDURE	CAT (OVER 6 MONTHS)	KITTEN (UNDER 6 MONTHS)
FVRCP ("Distemper") Vaccine	2 shots, given 2-3 weeks apart if healthy; then given once yearly	Starting at 6 weeks old, 4 shots, given 2-3 weeks apart if healthy; then given once yearly.
Rabies Vaccine	1 shot, given at first appointment if healthy; booster one year later, then given every 3 years	Given at roughly 16 weeks when kitten has reached 3lb if healthy; booster one year later, then given every 3 years
Dewormer	3 doses given orally 2 weeks apart, started at first appointment	3 doses given orally 2 weeks apart, started at first appointment
Spay/Neuter	If healthy, done immediately	Kittens must weigh at least 2lb and be healthy

FOSTERING DOGS AND PUPPIES (OVER 8 WEEKS OLD)

Fostering dogs and puppies is a lot of fun but can be a lot of work. Dogs can require some extra time and effort to help them show off their good habits and traits that make them stand out from the rest. Some dogs may require some extra training or patience due to their past. Puppies, while cute and fun, are definitely a lot of work! They need help housetraining and learning to be well-behaved, indoor pets. By providing a little bit of time, love, and patience, you can help change the chances a dog has at being adopted into a loving home.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

This is a recommended list of supplies needed to foster a dog with Angels of Assisi. Some (or all) of these can be provided to you. You may also purchase your own supplies, but be sure to keep the receipt to claim as a charitable donation!

- Food and water bowls
- Leash and collar
- Food (it is recommended to feed Purina Dog Chow [green bag], or Purina Puppy Chow [blue bag] so if your foster dog comes back to the Adoption Center, there won't be a sudden change in food. You can also give canned food in addition to dry, if you'd like)
- Crate – we highly recommend crate-training to our adopters and encourage our foster homes to work on this with their foster dogs
- Extras, such as a bed, toys, and treats will help your foster dog's time with you more enjoyable

BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

You are probably going to have a period of adjustment when you first take your foster dog home. This can include housetraining, separation anxiety, crate-training, and other habits. If you can help your foster dog overcome these issues, it will certainly help make him or her stand out from the rest.

Problem: Lack of housetraining

Solution: Dogs like schedules, they like predictability. Put your foster dog on a schedule and they should pick up on it rather quickly. Correcting a dog for having an accident in the house is only effective if you caught the dog in the act. Never scold a dog for an old accident; they can't equate the current punishment with the past crime. Crate-training is highly recommended and most adopters see being crate-trained a bonus. Dogs try very hard to not mess where they sleep and eat, so when they are in their crate and view that as their 'home', they will try very hard to not use the bathroom in there. If your foster dog has been in his crate for several hours, take him outside immediately after letting him out of his crate. Offer lots of praise if he uses the bathroom outside. If he does not eliminate while outside, monitor him closely when you go back inside. Watch for obvious signs (sniffing, circling, etc) and take him back outside if you see these. If you catch the dog in the midst of an accident indoors, offer a loud, firm 'NO!' and immediately take him outside. When he finishes his business outside, offer lots of praise. Never rub a dog's nose in an old accident. Housetraining takes time and does not happen overnight. But with lots of patience you'll be able to add 'housetrained' to your foster dog's bio!

Problem: Chewing

Solution: This is a common complaint with puppies and some younger adult dogs. Puppies chew to help alleviate pain from teething. Adults chew due to boredom, stress, or anxiety. Provide your foster dog with plenty of appropriate things to chew on and redirect him to these toys if he begins chewing on something you'd rather him not. If your foster dog chews on your belongings when you leave the house, consider crating him. Also incorporate more exercise into his routine; a tired dog is a happy (and well-behaved) dog! Remember, Angels of Assisi will not be held responsible for personal items lost to your foster dog's curiosity, so be sure to do everything you can to help protect your belongings.

Problem: Separation Anxiety

Solution: If your foster dog exhibits destructive behavior when left alone, he may suffer from separation anxiety. It's important to distinguish between separation anxiety and boredom. If you come back home to signs of your foster dog attempting to get out of the house (blinds are destroyed, wood around the door frame is clawed, etc), then chances are you have a dog with separation anxiety. If you have the time to work with him, you can help your foster dog overcome the fear of you never coming home again. Try this exercise, quoted directly from Best Friends Society's foster handbook:

“Start out by leaving the dog in your home for very short intervals. Tell the dog to wait and then walk outside for a few minutes before returning. When you return to the house, praise the dog for waiting. Begin to gradually leave the dog for longer and longer periods of time. It is important that, when you leave, you remain calm and not make a big deal out of leaving. It is also important that you not be too excited when you return. You want to praise the dog, but calmly. You don't want your return to be such an exciting event that the dog anxiously anticipates the moment of your return. Perhaps the most effective treatment for separation anxiety is time. Be patient. As your foster dog spends more time with you, he will begin to feel more secure in knowing that when you leave, you always come back.”

Crate-training and lots of exercise are, again, great recommendations for separation anxiety. A tired dog is a happy dog (and a less destructive dog!)

Keeping Foster Dog Healthy

We do our best to be aware of any and all health concerns with our pets. But because our dogs can come from all walks of life, we can be unaware of some health concerns. This is why it's important to keep your pets current on their vaccines and consider a quarantine period before introducing your foster dog to your own pets.

Common Illnesses in Dogs

Canine Distemper

This is a viral disease that is most common in puppies 3-6 months of age and is often fatal. The beginning symptoms look like a cold.

Signs and Symptoms: Eye and nasal discharge, loss of appetite, weight loss, vomiting, diarrhea

Treatment: Veterinary care including fluid therapy and antibiotics

Transmission: Very contagious

Parvovirus

“Parvo” is a very serious disease that generally affects puppies and young adult dogs that are unvaccinated. The virus can live in an environment for up to six months or longer. It's important that if you have had a dog with parvo in your house, to use a bleach solution and clean thoroughly and often. Dogs can contract the virus simply by coming in contact with the areas where a previously infected dog has been.

Signs and Symptoms: Lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Treatment: Veterinary care but can prove fatal

Transmission: Very contagious to other dogs, especially if in contact with infected feces or vomit.

“Kennel Cough”

This is an infection affecting the respiratory tract and coughing can be caused by pressing on the throat or causing physical exertion. Kennel cough will usually resolve itself in 1-3 weeks, but antibiotics are often given to prevent a secondary infection. This virus is very common in both boarding facilities and shelters. The bordatella vaccine protects against one of the main causes of kennel cough.

Signs and Symptoms: Cough, runny nose and eyes

Treatment: Veterinary care including antibiotics and cough suppressants

Transmission: Very contagious to other dogs

Earmites

These are tiny parasites that live in the ear canal

Symptoms: Itching, head shaking, scratching, dark brown discharge in the ears

Treatment: Veterinary care, including topical treatment (such as Revolution) or medication applied directly into the ear canal

Transmission: Contagious to other animals, but usually must result in direct contact

Ringworm

This is a fungus related to athlete's foot and is not an actual worm

Symptoms: Irregular patches of missing fur, skin will appear dry and scaly

Treatment: Veterinary care, including an injection or topical creams

Transmission: Very contagious to other animals and humans; does require direct contact with the animal

Fleas

These tiny bugs feed on the blood of cats, dogs, humans, and other animals. Although they are small, they usually attack in large numbers

Symptoms: Intense itching and scratching

Treatment: Topical application such as Frontline or Revolution

Transmission: Very contagious to other animals and people

Round, Tape, and Hook Worms

Most commonly seen in kittens and young cats, these parasites affect the cat's digestive system

Symptoms: Bloated belly, inability to gain weight

Treatment: Oral dewormer medication

Transmission: Contagious if animals come into contact with (and subsequently ingest) the feces of the infected pet

Cleaning Procedures

It's important to keep a sick foster dog separated from healthy resident dog, but it's also important to remember to keep foster dog's area clean so he can get to feeling better quicker. Using a 10% bleach solution will kill most bacteria and viruses. Soak the items and let stand for several minutes before rinsing the solution. If your last foster dog or puppies were diagnosed with parvo, you may be asked to wait several months before fostering another unvaccinated animal again, due to the highly contagious nature of the disease.

Routine Vet Care

Foster dogs will be provided with routine vet care at no cost to the foster parent. Below is a table outlining the vaccine schedule for both adult dogs (over 6 months of age) and puppies.

PROCEDURE	DOG (OVER 6 MONTHS)	PUPPY (UNDER 6 MONTHS)
DHPPC ("Distemper") Vaccine	2 shots, given 2-3 weeks apart if healthy; then given once yearly	Starting at 6 weeks old, 4 shots, given 2-3 weeks apart if healthy; then given once yearly.
Rabies Vaccine	1 shot, given at first appointment if healthy; booster one year later, then given every 3 years	Given at 16 weeks if healthy; booster one year later, then given every 3 years
Bordatella ("Kennel Cough") Vaccine	Intranasal vaccine, given immediately, then once yearly	Intranasal vaccine, given at 8 weeks of age, then once yearly
Dewormer	3 doses given orally 2 weeks apart, started at first appointment	3 doses given orally 2 weeks apart, started at first appointment
Spay/Neuter	If healthy, done immediately	Puppies must weigh at least 2lb and be healthy; we generally wait until 16 weeks of age so rabies vaccine can be done at same time